

Guitarist Cheryl Maust's new CD, 'Yellow Wings' evokes scenes of nature and transformation

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By John Torsiello

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On the sweeten'd ground in the meadow of dawn's light

I walked a path alone and saw a butterfly in flight.

NEW HARTFORD — Cheryl Maust saw many a butterfly on her excursions to a secluded island off the coast of Maine years ago. In that still somewhat wild land, she was deeply inspired by the natural world she saw all around her, and also by award-winning America author E.B. White, whom she met through friends when she was vacationing as a young woman in the Pine Tree State. White and Maust were staying near to one another.

“He would lend me his boat and I would go to an island off the coast, where I would chase butterflies and eat blueberries off the bushes,” the New Hartford singer, musician and songwriter related of those blissful days on that very special island. The name of the island is Hog Island. It was a special place for E.B. White (he owned the island). The meteor showers were fascinating to watch at night when lying on the ground looking into the stars.”

Some 40 years later, Maust's memories took flight and alighted on paper when she penned “Yellow Wings,” an ode to the spiritual connection one can find “when you walk in the path of a

butterfly.”

I smelled the sweet perfume and felt the earth beneath my soul.

I saw a yellow light with hues of amber gold, symmetrically dancing.

I gave myself two wings and embraced the beauty of my life often brings.

Maust’s two daughters collaborated with her on the song and its presentation to the world. Autumn and Sierra (both graduates of Northwestern Regional 7 High School) wrote the melody for the chorus along with the lyric in the bridge. Sierra designed the fanciful cover art to compliment the arrangement.

“Butterflies are indicators of a healthy environment and ecosystems,” said Cheryl Maust. “In numerous cultures butterflies reflect beauty, joy and hope. Our vision is to inspire more people to grow butterfly gardens and make the world a little more colorful.” And wouldn’t that be a nice thing?

Maust is an accomplished musician who has written other arrangements, including “The Finish Line,” a tribute to the famous race horse Barbaro, for its owners Roy and Gretchen Jackson; “Beautiful Journey,” for the United States Olympic Committee, “Flowers Bloom in May,” for a groundbreaking ceremony for St. John’s Church in Pine Meadow; and “Prometheus Fire,” recorded by European classical guitarist George Hadjimarkou.

“Yellow Wings” has been arranged for full orchestra by Professor Thomas Schuttenhelm, an American composer, accomplished author and concert guitarist. Maust, somewhat on a hopeful lark and at the urging of friend and mentor Hadmumarkou, sent “Yellow Wings” to Schuttenhelm.

“Thomas contacted me via email and we had correspondence while arranging the ‘Yellow Wings’ music score. It was such an honor. It sounds so beautiful and we hope that it can be part of a soundtrack for a movie. We see it as that,” said Maust. The song is also the first part of a collective EP titled “Spirit of the Seasons.”

Namelessly fancy, I passed through the trees without asking.

I watched the fog lift slowly and dry the royal air, while underneath an old tree with weeping willow hair.

It was dreamy invitation nature’s love has come to share,

With imaginary friends leaping in the air.

The owner of Simply Guitar Studio in New Hartford, where she teaches the art of the instrument in three styles – classical, electric and acoustic – was influenced deeply by the aforementioned White, who she remembers as a quiet, thoughtful unassuming man who was kind, although somewhat reticent of human interaction. His was the world of the mind and he

conjured up such magnificent children's books as "Charlotte's Web," "Stuart Little," and "The Trumpet of the Swan." Although aimed at a young audience, the books touched the souls and imaginations of all ages.

"He was an amazing person," Maust said. "Anyone who can make a spider famous is special and very inspiring."

Yellow Wings debuted earlier this year at the Tapping Reeve Meadow in Litchfield on Make Music Day NWCT. The song is being followed up by "Purple Mittens" for the winter season, "October Lullaby" for fall, and "Sandy Blankets" for summer in Maust's four-song EP.

I gave myself two wings and embraced the beauty my life often brings.

Namelessly fancy I pass'd by the bees. Without asking when the clouds came out I didn't go and hide.

I found my shadow right where it always was with the wind and rain, my colors still remained as I found my way to the garden gate.

To Maust, a member of The Academy of American Poets, (isn't songwriting, poetry set to music?) "Yellow Wings" represents not only those precious memories of idyllic days in her past, but also the sweet image of a dancer who views a painting, turns into a butterfly and awakens delight and fancy in all who behold her movement.

"It is a pas de deux with nature, movement that becomes transformative and grows. I envision a dancer looking at a painting, perhaps a Degas. The dancer goes into the woods and transforms into a butterfly. The original music score for 'Yellow Wings' is an acoustic expression of a natural transformation, an enchainment (a short series of ballet steps) of movement and growth."

She added, "When I think of that island off the coast of Maine I think how special a place it was. I love the imagery it presented me. I wanted to make my song simple yet not simplistic. I still go to the Maine coast to write. It remains a most special place for me."

Symmetrically dancing, I gave myself two wings and embraced the beauty my life often brings...my Yellow Wings.

"Yellow Wings" is available for download at www.cdbaby.com.